UPDATED 2.1 (4.26.2019)

You can think of Waterfall as an addendum or as a new format entirely. Either way, it shakes things up, requires little to no deck tweaking, and is a lot of fun. Essentially, it turns any old game of magic into a mill format where your deck is your life.

There are no dice necessary other than for the purpose of counters. It works best in conjunction with EDH/Commander. It mixes well with most formats.

Whenever a player would lose life in any form (hit for damage, pay life, etc.) they mill the number of cards from the top of their deck directly into a zone to the right of their library called "the river."

Above the library is another zone known as "the mist." Life gain results in cards from the river being placed in the mist. When a player's library is depleted, his or her mist becomes a new library. If a player can no longer continue the water cycle -- that is to say they have no library or mist and are required to draw a card – he or she loses the game.

You can still have your commander. You can run the same deck. You just switch it up for something a bit different, oftentimes with a big finish.

. History .

Magic the Gathering: Waterfall was originally conceptualized back in 2012.

Initially, players would simply mill into their graveyard. Judges and long-time players immediately found exploits. This lead to a great deal of errata specifically when playing the format. Ignore this phrase, ignore that phrase. It just didn't feel right. Anyone who has worked in design knows that creating exceptions to fix new rules is setting yourself up for complications. New rules are OK, but it's important to simplify at any opportunity possible.

Milling is fun. That needed to be the focus.

The big change came with letting all the errata go and instead milling into a completely different zone. Waterfalls don't go into graveyards anyway. The river allowed players to use the same decks from other games without as much tweaking.

If you'd like to try out version 1.0, then use the graveyard instead of a river and ignore all phrases on cards that attempt to shuffle graveyards into libraries. In the original version, poison counters also exile the top three cards of an opponent's library. The mist is part of the original version. This requires a completely different deck build specifically for waterfall.

. Time Frame .

More often than not, Waterfall with 100 cards is faster than EDH/Commander but Waterfall with 60 cards is slower than a normal game.

. The River .

Lose life and cards gets milled here, face up. You're not getting them back unless you gain life at just the right time or retrieve a card from outside the game. Like Nicol Bolas, your power is being stripped away. This is a zone that is considered "outside the game."

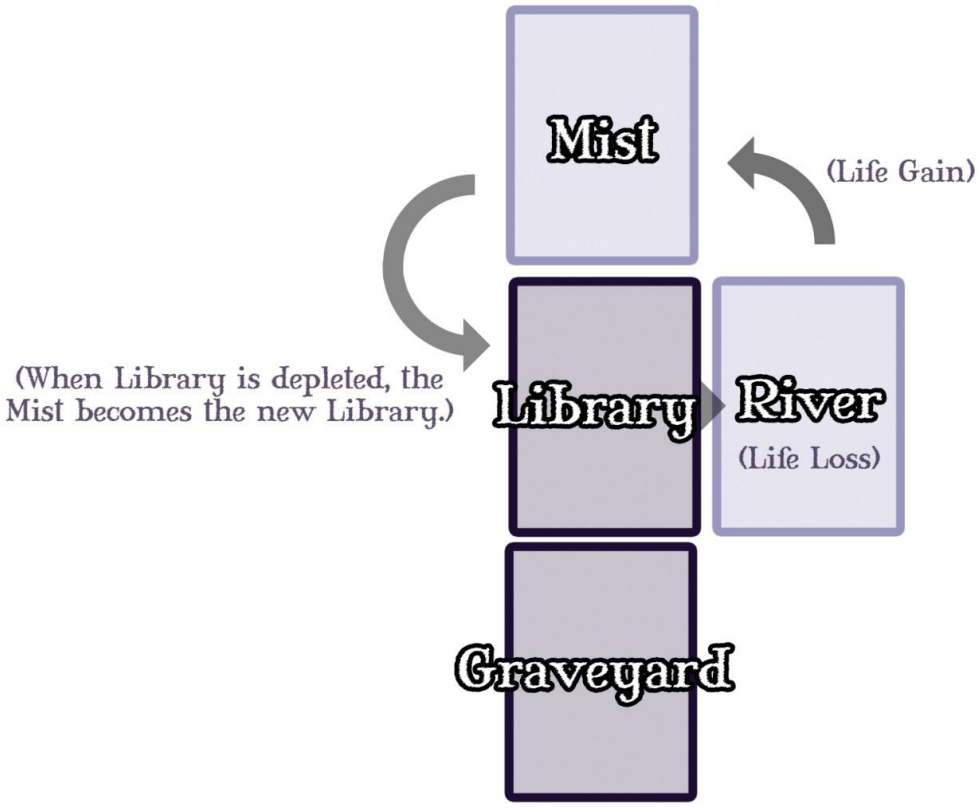
. The Mist .

When a player gains life he or she takes the top card of his or her river (for each life gained) and places it face down in a deck above his or her library called "the Mist". *

If a player has Mist when his or her library runs out, his or her mist is shuffled and becomes the new library, instantaneously and without using the stack. They do not lose the game for not being able to draw until they have neither a library nor a mist and are asked to draw a card. This is a zone that is considered "outside the game."

**Yes, this means a player can never gain more life than what they started with, 100 or 60 respectfully.*

. Example.



Situation 1:

Turn 1: You are hit for six damage. You take the top six cards of your library and put them in your river face up.
Turn 2: You notice that *Ajani's Pridemate* -- a staple in your deck -- has fallen into your river and is on the top. You play *tandem tactics*, which causes you to gain two life in addition to other effects. This means you return *Ajani's Pridemate* and the card beneath from your river to your Mist.
Turn 30: Your library is empty. Normally, you would lose the game, but your Mist functions as a reserve. It immediately is shuffled and becomes your new library. Ajani's Pridemate is in there somewhere.

Situation 2:

Sovereign's Bite says "Target player loses 3 life and you gain 3 life."

You notice that *Ulamog, the Infinite Gyre* -- a card that is a game changer in Waterfall -- is the second card from the top in your river. You want to make a trade.

You choose yourself as "target player."

The top three cards from your river move to your mist as the top three cards from your library move into your river. Essentially, you've traded to ensure *Ulamog* is in your Mist.

Situation 3:

Johnny has *Laboratory Maniac* on the field. It reads "If you would draw a card while your library has no cards in it, you win the game instead." His library has one card. Next turn, he can draw three cards.

Erika, his opponent, decides to play *Stream of Life*, with x as 10 and Johnny as the target. Stream of life says "Target player gains X life." Ten cards from Johnny's river are added to Johnny's mist. Johnny will no longer win next turn, because he has 10 cards in his mist that will instantly become his new library.

Situation 4:

Clear the Mind says "target player shuffles their graveyard into their library."

You have been using fetches and tutors all game. Many of your creatures have died. Your opponent has you on the fence.

You decide to play *Clear the Mind,* which causes you to shuffle your graveyard into your library, thereby restoring life.

Situation 5:

You put *Bitterblossom* on the field thereby losing the top card of your deck each turn to your river. *Skullbriar, the Walking Grave,* the card you have been hoping for, enters the river.

You play *Living Wish* to retrieve a creature card from outside the game to your hand. You choose *Skullbriar* as the creature. You take skullbriar out of your river and place it into your hand.

. Special Notes .

Your life total is the number of cards in your Mist + Your Library.

Contrary to what you might expect, for all intents and purposes aside from deck legality check, the River and Mist are both "outside the game." This decision was made so that cards such as Burning Wish wouldn't feel so sad. They deserve love. In this format they can function as a tutor for cards beyond normal reach in the mist or river.

Paying life (taking a card from the top of the deck and placing it into the river) is not considered drawing a card, discarding a card, exiling a card, or a card entering the graveyard. It is simply paying life and must be treated that way for all purposes.

Water Fall may be splashed with any format of Magic with the exception of one where players share a deck, such as Fat Stack. Classic, EDH, Two-Headed Giant all work fine.

Reddit user SamohtGnir has suggested starting the game off with cards in your mist. This is an excellent idea and is something you as a playgroup can have fun trying out.